Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method ~~of using a data communications network~~, ~~the method~~ comprising:

receiving at a gateway device a first communication from a first network that is addressed for a network element of a second network, ~~wherein~~ where the second network is based on a different technology than the first network and ~~wherein~~ where the gateway device comprises a layer 3 gateway;

transmitting the first communication from the gateway device to the second network;

receiving at the gateway device a second communication from the second network that is addressed for a network element of the first network;

transmitting the second communication from the gateway device to the first network;

periodically polling the gateway device to obtain operating parameters related to the first and the second communications between the first and second networks;

analyzing the operating parameters; and

generating a health report related to stability of at least the gateway device, the health report being based upon analysis of the operating parameters.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein~~ where the polling of the gateway device to obtain operating parameters comprises obtaining information related to a flowcache.

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein~~ where the polling of the gateway device to obtain operating parameters comprises obtaining information related to an internet key exchange security association.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein~~ where the polling of the gateway device to obtain operating parameters comprises obtaining node configuration information.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 4 ~~wherein~~ where the node configuration information comprises a number of layer connections.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 5 ~~wherein~~ where the node configuration information comprises a number of VPRN (virtual private routed network) connections.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 5 ~~wherein~~ where the node configuration information comprises a number of IPSec tunnels.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein~~ where the first network comprises the Internet.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 8 ~~wherein~~ where the second network comprises at least one of a frame relay network, an asynchronous transfer mode network, private internet protocol network or an internet protocol virtual private network.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein~~ where the gateway further implements a firewall function when transmitting communications between the first and second networks.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein~~ where the analyzing of the operating parameters comprises comparing the operating parameters to a threshold value.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, ~~and~~ further comprising setting a flag if the operating parameters exceed the threshold value.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 12 ~~wherein~~ where the comparing of the operating parameters to a threshold value comprises comparing the operating parameters to a warning threshold value and also comparing the operating parameters to an augment threshold value.

14. (currently amended) A method ~~of monitoring the stability of a network~~, ~~the method~~ comprising:

periodically polling, via a network device, an inter-network gateway to collect data related to the inter-network gateway, the data related to at least one of a flowcache, a virtual private routed network, or an internet key exchange security association;

processing, via the network device, the data to generate a number of parameters;

generating, via the network device, a report based on the parameters, where the report relates to stability of the inter-network gateway; and

automatically transmitting, via the network device, the report, the report being transmitted without human intervention.

15. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 ~~wherein~~ where the data comprises data related to a flowcache, a virtual private routed network, and an internet key exchange security association.

16. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 ~~wherein~~ where the generating of the [[a]] report comprises indicating whether any of the parameters indicate a possibility of a network instability.

17. (currently amended) The method of claim 16 ~~wherein~~ where the generating of the [[a]]report comprises generating a report that has a warning flag if a parameter exceeds a first threshold and generating a report that has an augment flag if a parameter exceeds a second threshold.

18. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 ~~wherein~~ where the polling of the [[an]] inter-network gateway to collect data related to the inter-network gateway comprises collecting data related to a flowcache.

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 18 ~~wherein~~ where the parameters comprise statistics related to flows, predicted flows, connections, conversations and packets.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 ~~wherein~~ where the polling of the [[an]]inter-network gateway to collect data related to the inter-network gateway comprises collecting data related to a virtual private routed network.

21. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 ~~wherein~~ where the polling of the [[an] inter-network gateway to collect data related to the inter-network gateway comprises collecting data related to an internet key exchange security association.

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 21 ~~wherein~~ where the parameters comprise a count of number of dead IKE SAs.

23. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 ~~wherein~~ where the polling of the [[an]] inter-network gateway to collect data related to the inter-network gateway

further comprises collecting data related to card toggles, CPU utilization or memory utilization.

24. (currently amended) ~~In a system for monitoring the stability of a data communications network, a computer program operable to periodically gather information related to the network and provide a report related to the gathered information,~~ A tangible computer readable memory comprising computer-executable instructions, the ~~computer program~~ computer-executable instructions comprising:

computer program code [[for]] to automatically, periodically ~~polling~~ poll a plurality of internetwork gateways to collect data related to the plurality of inter-network ~~gateway~~ gateways, the data related to at least one of a flowcache, a virtual private routed network, or an internet key exchange security association;

computer program code ~~for processing~~ to process the data to generate a number of parameters;

computer program code ~~for generating~~ to generate a report based on the parameters, where the report relates to stability of the inter-network gateways; and

computer program code [[for]] to automatically ~~transmitting~~ transmit the report, the report being transmitted without human intervention.

25. (currently amended) The computer ~~program~~ readable memory of claim 24 ~~wherein~~ where the ~~program code operates~~ computer-executable instructions operate on a UNIX-based operating system.

26. (currently amended) The computer readable memory ~~program~~ of claim 24 ~~wherein~~ where the computer program code to automatically, periodically poll ~~periodically polling~~ the gateways ~~comprises initiating~~ is further to initiate a SNMP connection with each of the gateways.

27. (currently amended) The computer readable memory ~~program~~ of claim 24 ~~wherein~~ where computer program code to automatically, periodically poll ~~periodically polling~~ the gateways ~~comprises initiating~~ is further to initiate a CLI connection with each of the gateways.

28. (currently amended) The computer ~~program~~ readable memory of claim 24 and further comprising computer program code ~~for writing~~ to write data collected from the gateways into a file.

29. (currently amended) The computer ~~program~~ readable memory of claim 28 ~~wherein~~ where the computer program code ~~for writing~~ to write data is further to write ~~comprises computer program code for writing~~ raw data into a raw data file and ~~computer program code for writing~~ to write summary data into a summary data file.

30. (currently amended) The computer ~~program~~ readable memory of claim 24 ~~wherein~~ where the computer program code ~~for automatically transmitting~~ to automatically transmit the report comprises computer program code ~~for automatically transmitting~~ to automatically transmit an ASCII file via e-mail.

31. (currently amended) An apparatus for use in monitoring the stability of a network, the apparatus comprising:

a processor;

a memory coupled to the processor; and

an interface mechanism coupled to the processor;

~~wherein~~ where the processor ~~runs software~~ is to:

periodically poll an inter-network gateway through the interface mechanism to collect data related to the inter-network gateway,

~~the processor further processing~~ process the data to generate a number of parameters,

~~generating~~ generate a report based on the parameters, where the report relates to stability of the inter-network gateway, and

~~causing~~ cause the report to be transmitted to a remote location.

32. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 31 ~~wherein~~ where the data is related to at least one of a flowcache, a virtual private routed network, or an internet key exchange security association.

33. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 32 ~~wherein~~ where the data comprises data related to all of a flowcache, a virtual private routed network, and an internet key exchange security association.

34. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 32 ~~wherein~~ where the processor, when polling [[an]] the inter-network gateway to collect data related to the inter-network gateway, is further to collect ~~comprises collecting~~ data related to a flowcache.

35. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 34 ~~wherein~~ where the parameters comprise statistics related to flows, predicted flows, connections, conversations and packets.

36. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 32 ~~wherein~~ where the processor, when polling [[an]] the inter-network gateway to collect data related to the inter-network gateway, is further to collect ~~comprises collecting~~ data related to a virtual private routed network.

37. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 32 ~~wherein~~ where the processor, when polling [[an]] the inter-network gateway to collect data related to the inter-network gateway, is further to collect ~~comprises collecting~~ data related to an internet key exchange security association.

38. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 31 ~~wherein~~ where the processor, when generating [[a]] the report ~~comprises indicating~~, is further to indicate whether any of the parameters indicate a possibility of a network instability.

39. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 38 ~~wherein generating a~~ where the report comprises ~~generating a report that has~~ a warning flag [[if]] when a parameter exceeds a first threshold and ~~generating a report that has~~ an augment flag [[if]] when a parameter exceeds a second threshold.